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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONTRARY VIEWS

BOOTHBAY HARBOR, MAINE.

SIR,—As a citizen of the United States, for myself and for the thousands of fellow-citizens who will read with hearty approval the February REVIEW, and make no sign, I venture to offer well-deserved thanks, especially for your “Diplomats of Democracy.” I do not despair of the Republic. It is safe while defended by an honest, fearless, and independent press.

Seventy-seven years of life, four of which were given to assist in the preservation of the nation, gives me both the right and ability to recognize and greet a comrade, whether he serves with the sword or the mightier weapon. Even superlatives are too weak to express my intense satisfaction with your articles. Every statement is a granite block, square and fitted, secured by a copper bolt, headed on the inside.

GEORGE B. KENNISTON.

MANCHESTER, N. H.

SIR,—Thank you for a most delicious half-hour spent in reading “Mr. Bryan Rides Behind.” I cannot recall enjoying anything of a political sort more in a long time. Disagreeing with you on almost every partisan question, I have, nevertheless, long enjoyed your comment, first in the *Weekly*, and more recently in the REVIEW, but I have never found anything you have written more delightful than this latest effort of yours.

Your previous contribution on “Brother Pindell” was excruciatingly facile, but you quite surpass yourself in your handling of Bryan as Secretary of State. I presume you agree with most of us who hold that Wilson has very shrewdly disposed of Bryan, as a political menace in the future, by supplying the opportunity for him to disclose his ineptness for public responsibility. This may be good politics, but it is playing havoc with American prestige.

FRANK KNOX,

Editor of the Manchester Union.

RALEIGH, N. C.

SIR,—I cannot refrain from making you this suggestion: Now that the whole world is applauding the rare judgment and foresight which led you to see years ago what a great President Woodrow Wilson would make, what is the use of your now undertaking the vain task of trying to make everybody think that you were wrong then?

Five or six years ago mighty few people agreed with you in thinking

Woodrow Wilson the greatest man the Democrats could name for the Presidency, but an even smaller number agree with you now in a contrary opinion.

I must simply relieve my mind by making these observations.

CLARENCE POE,
Editor of the Progressive Farmer.

PHILADELPHIA.

SIR,—Permit me to present my warmest felicitations on your splendid editorial on Mr. Bryan—such exquisite, delicious irony, such penetration, such gentle, persuasive, delightful approbation, such searching, truthful, and just comment mark it as one of the gems in our current literature.

GEORGE W. OCHS,
Editor of the Public Ledger.

FROM EX-GOVERNOR PENNYPACKER

HARRISBURG, PA.

SIR,—In the language of my Quaker forefathers the spirit moves me to write to you to indicate my appreciation of the literary art and excellence shown in your recent article upon Mr. Bryan. Its railleury is the more effective because its tone is gentle and delicate. I am not sure, however, that its motive has given me as much pleasure as its skill in construction, since it seems to me that the shafts directed against an untrained Secretary of State had better be turned toward the President who selected him. Perhaps you will pardon me for saying that it has long been a source of wonder to me that an adept like yourself should be able to find anything admirable in the literary compositions of Mr. Wilson, whose efforts always disclose a mind of desultory growth unable to grasp the English language.

SAMUEL W. PENNYPACKER.

NEW YORK CENTRAL FINANCES

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—The January number of THE REVIEW contained an article by Mr. W. Jett Lauck on "The Plight of the Railroads," in which appeared the following assertion: "It is a matter of official record that when the two railroads which formed the nucleus of one of the largest trunk-lines of the country (obviously the New York Central) were combined in 1869, a stock dividend of 100 per cent., equal to \$44,428,330 in money, was declared. At a recent hearing before the Interstate Commerce Commission it was stated that a total of \$93,034,026 of stock had been floated by this company during the period 1870–1910, for which not a cent was added to the value or earning capacity of the property. A drain of \$5,535,000 annually upon the earnings of this system is necessary to pay dividends upon this fictitious capitalization." Whereupon Mr. Frank W. Stevens, Chairman of Valuation Committees of the New York Central lines, having besought elucidation from the writer, the following correspondence ensued:

FROM MR. LAUCK TO MR. STEVENS

WASHINGTON, *February 11, 1914.*

DEAR SIR,—The basis for the statements made relative to the New York